

REFLECTIONS ON REPRESENTING  
THE 27TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS**HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 21, 2010*

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest and most sincere appreciation to my colleagues of this Congress, and the constituents of South Texas, which has been part of my life while representing the 27th Congressional District of Texas for close to 28 years. I have had the distinct honor to serve as an elected official for the past 46 years, beginning at the ripe age of 27 as a County Constable, County Commissioner, County Sheriff, and finally as a Member of Congress.

I leave many great memories of my time in the Halls of Congress and in the U.S. House of Representatives. Those vivid memories of my arrival that cold winter day in Washington, shortly after the victorious election of 1982, will live on forever. I remember driving around the Capitol and through Washington, DC; the opportunity was great; the moment was there; I had been granted the chance to represent hundreds of thousands of constituents from Deep South Texas.

Today, as I retire from the distinguished House of Representatives, I reflect on the past with satisfaction as I look forward to the future with enthusiasm for the next chapter of what life has to offer. I will be spending well-deserved time with my beautiful children—Solomon Jr. and Yvette—as well as my grandson, Oscar, and the rest of my family. I look forward to a much less hectic life. I must admit, I will miss my colleagues—both Democrats and Republicans—and will miss representing some of the most loving, caring, amazing and interesting people of Texas—the constituents of the 27th Congressional District of Texas.

To my friends, supporters and those who have been with me since I was first elected to office in 1964 at the age of 27, from the very bottom of my heart, I thank you for standing by me and with me through it all. Words cannot tell how much I appreciate the love and support you have shown me and my family over the years. Thank you for the good memories and endless accomplishments; thank you for your vote of confidence and for believing in me; thank you for your love and words of encouragement as I worked to be the voice for all the people of South Texas, including minorities, the middle class, poor, vulnerable, and less fortunate.

As I deliver these last few words in the House of Representatives, I am at ease and peace with myself, my family, my colleagues in Congress, my constituents, life and most importantly, I am at ease with God. I truly believe that through our work and significant contributions during my years of service in Congress, we leave South Texas better than before. A more vibrant, economic-friendly and socially developed South Texas. Through the work of local, county, state and federal officials we were able to accomplish great deeds.

Thousands of memories from experiences in my service remain part of the tapestry of my

life and always will. I remember the votes on war . . . on economic justice. The battles for bases and 21st Century transportation in South Texas . . . fights and alliances with White House occupants . . . all I remember and savor—whether my side prevailed or not.

This is a great place—despite the shortcomings . . . despite the pettiness of our members from time to time, and despite the dangerous political climate created by those who turned cable news shows into political juggernauts. Democracy is by no means perfect . . . but it still beats all the alternatives.

I leave the national stage, certain of having done the right thing for those I represented. In the thousands of votes I cast in Congress for the 27th Congressional District of Texas, time and time again, I voted to make South Texas and this nation a better and stronger place.

I end my public service with an appropriate verse from Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken."

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

It certainly has made all the difference.  
I yield back my time, for the last time.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF LOUIS FINKEL TO THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY**HON. BART GORDON**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 21, 2010*

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of a valued staff member of the Committee on Science and Technology, my Chief of Staff, Louis Finkel. While Louis still has decisions to make about his future, I've already made my choice. He may remain with the Committee or with the House, but after next week, I no longer will and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank him for his service.

Louis worked for me in my personal office from 1996 to 2001 in several positions, including Legislative Director. He also worked in the office of former Representative Peter Deutsch (D-FL) and in the private sector, representing the interests of educational institutions, nonprofits, and technology and energy companies.

Louis was one of the first hires I made when we took over the majority. I have always said I wanted this to be the Committee of "good ideas and consensus;" and Louis was key to implementing that pledge, with his balance of Hill and private sector experience. He was responsible for steering our committee agenda and organizing our efforts to reach out to folks interested in the business of the committee. He performed that exceedingly well, and when my long-time Chief of Staff retired, there was no one but Louis I could think of to fill the role. He was able to provide a seamless transition and we didn't miss a beat. It helped that he came into the Chief of Staff role with a deep knowledge of the Committee's work, as well as the respect of Members, staff, and the outside community.

The Chief of Staff is a challenging job: you need to not only be able to see the big picture, but also the details. Louis has the ability to row but also to steer. He has mastered the policy, politics and management aspects of the job.

Louis has said that there may be people that are smarter than his is, but there are few that are willing to work harder than he is. That drive and preparation has paid off, and I have been the beneficiary.

When he's not overachieving at work, he may be doing it in the kitchen, where he loves to impress family and friends with his command of the culinary arts.

Louis, I thank you for all your counsel and tireless efforts, and I thank Stacey, Max, and Caleb for their support. I will certainly miss working with you day to day.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LOIS CAPPS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 21, 2010*

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I was not able to be present for the following rollcall vote on December 17, 2010, and would like the record to reflect that I would have voted as follows: rollcall No. 656: "yes."

REDUCTION OF LEAD IN DRINKING  
WATER ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOE BACA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 17, 2010*

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for one minute.

I rise in strong support of S. 3874, the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act. This bill amends the Safe Drinking Water Act to uniformly reduce the allowable lead content in solder, flux, pipe and fixtures.

It is important to strengthen and clarify national standards for lead in drinking water. Our families and children should feel comfortable knowing that the water they drink is safe. In my district, California's 43rd, we are faced with many water issues and the most severe is perchlorate found in our ground water. Our drinking water was compromised.

No one should have water compromised by perchlorate or lead. This bill is a positive step forward in eliminating the serious health threats and economic burdens caused by lead exposure.

In California, we have a new lead free standard that requires manufacturers to phase out potential exposure from materials in drinking water plumbing by this year. With S. 3874, families in other states will have greater protection from lead exposure.

I urge my colleagues to show their commitment to the safety of America's families and support S. 3874, the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act.